



Universität  
Zürich<sup>UZH</sup>

Historisches Seminar

# Humility across Times and Cultures: Concepts, Practices, Artifacts

Conference  
23.09 – 25.09.2026

University of Zurich  
RAA-G-01  
Rämistrasse 59  
8001 Zürich

**Scientific Responsibility:**  
Silvia Negri  
(UZH, Historisches Seminar)  
James Weaver  
(University of Oxford)

**Practical Coordination:**  
Larissa Herzog  
(UZH, Historisches Seminar)

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The event is part of the SNF  
Starting Grant research project  
*Humility in theory and practice:  
Historical approaches across  
cultures (1250–1500)*. You can  
find more information about  
the project here



## UZH alumni

GEGRÜNDET 1883 ALS  
ZÜRCHER HOCHSCHULVEREIN



Universität  
Zürich<sup>UZH</sup>

Conference, 23.09 – 25.09.2026

# Humility across Times and Cultures: Concepts, Practices, Artifacts



Image: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Bağdat 282, fol. 16r

# Wednesday

23.09.2026

16:30 – 17:30

## Introduction

**Silvia Negri**

*Universität Zürich*

**James Weaver**

*University of Oxford*

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18:15 – 19:45

## Evening Lecture

**Beth Williamson**

*University of Bristol*

Making Humility Visible:

The Madonna Seated on the Ground,  
the Sacred Reimagined

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20:00

*Apéro Riche*

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# Thursday

24.09.2026

9:30 – 10:30

## Panel 1

**Katharina Heyden**

*Universität Bern*

Humility as a Religious Core Virtue  
and a Social Force in the “Sayings of  
the Fathers”

**Karen Bauer**

*IIS London*

Mental, Bodily, and Social Spaces of  
Humility in the Qur’an

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10:30 – 11:00

*Coffee break*

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11:00 – 12:30

## Panel 2

**Felix Maier**

*Universität Zürich*

The Politics of Humility: How Late  
Roman Emperors Reimagined Power

**Maxim Venetskov**

*University of Glasgow*

The Highest Virtues and Their Contrary  
Vices in the Ladder of Divine Ascent and  
Its Manuscript Reception

**Maria Parani**

*University of Cyprus*

A Contradiction in Terms? Humility and  
the Expression of Piety in Medieval  
Byzantium

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12:30 – 14:00

*Lunch*

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14:00 – 15:00

## Panel 3

**Rebecca Sauer**

*Universität Zürich*

Humility in Medieval Arabic Dream  
Interpretation Manuals and Beyond

**Antonella Ghersetti**

*Università Ca’ Foscari, Venezia*

Humility, Modesty (and Haughtiness) in  
Arabic Literature of the Mamluk Period

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15:00 – 15:30

*Coffee break*

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15:30 – 16:30

## Panel 4

**Marion Katz**

*New York University*

Humility, Dignity and Status in  
Mamluk-era Islamic Sources

**Gowaart van den Bossche**

*Universität Zürich*

Historical Memory and the Imposition  
of Humility on non-Muslims in Late  
Medieval Egypt

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18:15 – 19:45

## Evening Lecture

**Christopher Melchert**

*University of Oxford (ret.)*

The Humility of the Ideal Muslim  
Scholar in the Earlier Middle Ages

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20:00

*Dinner*

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# Friday

25.09.2026

08:30 – 09:30

## Panel 5

**Catherine Hezser**

*SOAS, University of London*

The Torah Is Not Preserved by the  
Haughty, But With Someone Whose  
Spirit is Humble: Humility as a Rabbinic  
Value in Late Antiquity

**Lennart Lehnhäus**

*Universität Tübingen*

Torah, Distress and Poverty – the Ideal  
of Humility and Morality between Elites,  
Scholars and the Unlearned in Seder  
Eliyahu

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09:30 – 10:30

## Panel 6

**Annette Kehnel**

*Universität Mannheim*

Humilitas – a Remedy for Pleonexia?

**Matthias Tischler**

*ICREA, Barcelona*

Gentle, Quiet, and Effective:

The Subtle ‘Monastic Reform’ of the  
Post-Visigothic World Reflected in  
Carolingian Paraenetic Literature and  
Its Concept of Humility, Ninth to  
Thirteenth Centuries

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10:30 – 11:00

*Coffee break*

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11:00 – 12:30

## Panel 7

**Roberto Leggero**

*Università della Svizzera italiana*

Make Space. Occupy Space. Renegotiating  
the Individual Social Positioning  
through Humility, Communication and  
Performance (12th c.)

**Christopher M. Bellitto**

*Kean University*

Pierre d’Ailly’s Examination of Conscience:  
Humility, Grace, and Free Will

**Isabella Lazzarini**

*Università di Torino*

The Lexis of Humility in Political Corre-  
spondence (Italy, 1450–1520 ca.)

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12:30 – 14:30

*Lunch*

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14:30 – 16:00

## Discussants

**Letizia Osti**

*Università degli Studi di Milano*

**Miri Rubin**

*Queen Mary University of London*

**Simon Teuscher**

*Universität Zürich*

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16:00 – 16:30

*Coffee break*

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16:30 – 17:30

## Conclusion

**Silvia Negri**

*Universität Zürich*

**James Weaver**

*University of Oxford*

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19:00

*Dinner*

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